Illegal quarrying in Kutch

4131. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) wheiher Government are aware of the fact that illegal quarrying and mining in Kutch's Majestic Black Hill is threatening to destroy a fragile eco-system;

(b) whether it is a fact that civil contractors had been blasting away deep inside the hills for granite and sand over the last two months despite the fact that part of it forms the Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to stop illegal mining in the areas and save the Black Hills?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) to (c) Ministry of Mines is not aware of illegal quarrying and mining in Kutch's majestic black hill threatening to destory a fragile eco-system. However, instances of illegal mining in different States brought to the notice of Central Government from time to time are forwarded to concerned State Government for appropriate action. The States are the owners of minerals and illegal mining has serious revenue implications for the State. To effectively curb illicit mining, State Governments have been empowered to make ruels for preventing illegal mining, transportation and storage of minerals under the provisions of Section 23C of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.

Aluminium Plants

4132. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Aluminium Plants functioning at present both in private and public sector;

(b) the details of target fixed by all the plants with regard to production of aluminium during the last three years; and

(c) the performance and achievement of the above plants during this period?